

Candy Factory Explosion In Mexico Kills 1, Injures 40

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CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — An explosion inside a candy factory in the border city of Ciudad Juarez on Thursday left one person dead and at least 40 injured, Mexican authorities said. The blast took place on the second floor of the Dulces Blueberry factory and caused the floor to collapse, injuring people working downstairs, said factory worker Ismael Bouchet.

"I was able to help five people who walked out of the building but as soon as they were out they went into shock and fainted," he said outside the factory, which produces gummy bears, jelly beans, peach rings and other sweets.

Authorities said the cause of the blast hadn't been determined but Bouchet said a steam boiler had been installed recently in the area. Ciudad Juarez Civil Protection Director Fernando Mota said firefighters found a body inside and that six of the at least 40 injured are in serious condition. Several workers are missing and could be trapped inside the building, he added. Firefighters and rescue crews continued to search the building for more victims Thursday night.

Bouchet said people could smell acid in the area where the explosion occurred. "Since the morning, several co-workers said there was a bad smell, that it smelled of acid and because it was a new area we thought it was normal," Bouchet said. Photographs of workers being helped by paramedics showed people with injuries that resembled chemical burns.

Dulces Blueberry employs 300 people and the candy is sent to a distributor based in El Paso, Texas, which lies across the border from Ciudad Juarez. Ciudad Juarez is a manufacturing hub and the assembly plants there employ many of its residents.

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